

FALL WINTER



RIGHT BRIGADE JOHN SCHARBACH

THE COLLAPSE FRANKLIN RHI

86 MENTALITY

NOTHING DONE STRAIGHT AHEAD

NOTHING DONE



Usual introduction, who's in Nothing Done, when and why did you guys start...

We started like half a year ago. I just wanted to do another HC band that was more straightforward and simple sounding, and I already knew the guys I wanted to play with, so I asked Mark (guitar) and Alex (drums) whom I knew from when we all were in Know Your Enemy together. At the same time I asked Harm, who played bass for Reaching Forward and now has his new band, Razor Crusade. All three were stoked on the idea of forming a band together, and basically that's what happened.

How would you describe Nothing Done to someone who hasn't heard you before??

I would describe us as a HC band, but with all these fucked up definitions of the genre floating out there, I'd have to be more specific and say: a fast hardcore band in the purest sense of the word, with short songs, fast riffs, pissed off vocals and down to earth, dare I say simple and slightly retarded lyrics. A band that's not onto any agenda other than to play fast and aggressive hardcore and have a good time doing it.

What has influenced Nothing Done?

To me it seems there's more traditional sounding bands coming from Europe... the influences are kind of apparent I think, although some people have compared us musically to anything from Chain of Strength to Slapshot... personally, seeing how I wrote the songs on the demo, I can say we're influenced by 'victim in pain' era Agnostic Front, the Antidote 7"...and newer stuff like Shark Attack... and a little Stop and Think flavour was added along the way. About traditional bands coming from Europe... I don't know, there's a lot of bands playing defined styles of old school hardcore, like some bands do the typical youth crew thing, some want to sound like negative approach.... but still, there's way more bands in that grey area of the genre... bands who mix up styles and in doing so think they should add metal in the mix, but whatever. What I'm trying to say is, sure there's traditional hardcore bands here, but still, they're vastly outnumbered by the hybrids.

How's Nothing Done different to Know Your Enemy?

First of all, know your enemy was not "my" band. I just played bass for them for a while and that's it. I had no part in songwriting or anything else. Nothing Done is just something I wanted to do in terms of writing short hardcore songs with snotty or pissed off lyrics, and I basically formed the entire band. I just thought of kids I wanted to play in a band with, and they all were willing to do so. The vision I have for this band is to play shows we really want to play, and try to get on some good bills, and not play every weekend for a handful of kids who don't give a fuck because they can see you every weekend anyway... know what I mean?

How did it feel to start another band after your time in Know Your Enemy?

I left KYE before that band broke up, and put all my time and effort into my main band, Uppercut. But a while ago I just felt like starting a band with some of those dudes again, and I did. That's all there is to it.

What have you got planned now that the demo is out?

We have our first shows planned now, one with Knife Fight and two with Mental. We just signed to this Dutch label called Not Just Words Records, who fucking rule. They're putting out some good shit like the Icepick 7" and a My Luck 7". It's pretty low-key and totally hardcore. We're thinking about doing some small tours here and there... but I think it'll be just weekends, like, 2 or 3 shows in Germany, shit like that. I really don't have any long-term plans with this band... I can't see us being a band for years and years to come, but I definitely want to make a mark with Nothing Done. I want to make an impact. The demo has been getting amazing reviews and other feedback, and I hope the 7" will live up to people's expectations.

What's the deal with the 7"?

The 7" just came out on Not Just words records, an awesome label from Holland, ran by a stand-up dude called Ronnie. It has 3 re-recorded demo songs, and 5 new jams on there...it all fits together pretty well. The artwork features a whole bunch of my skateboards and a minty-green nothing done deck in the middle of it, It looks pretty damn cool in my opinion.

I've read kids write off European hardcore before, do you have any thoughts on why people do this? Who should we be looking out for now and what about the past?

Tons of US kids try to play off European bands as being Euro trash or whatever and it sucks because there are tons of good bands coming from Europe, especially at this very moment. In Holland we have great bands like No Turning Back, Icepick, A Step Apart, Abusive Action, BloodxRed and Downslide. In Belgium there's Justice and Dead Stop, in Germany there's Harsh Truth, Zero Mentality and Black Friday '29 are causing a stir, and then in the UK there's a whole new load of bands like SecondsxOut, On Thin Ice, The Legacy, Break It Up... tons more. All these bands are easily as good as a lot of American bands. My girlfriend lives in Boston, so I get to check out bands there frequently, and believe me, there's a lot of shitty or extremely mediocre bands there that people still go apeshit for. As far as the past goes: Mainstrike, Eyeball, Sportswear, Know Your Enemy, Reaching Forward of course... so much good shit has come out of Europe.

Please give a brief explanation for each of the demo songs...

What I Think This song's about people who go through life thinking they should just do everything according to the norm... do whatever society believes to be "normal" or acceptable. All the while they're thinking they have it so great, while in reality they're just living their lives in fear of what other people might think.

I Don't Care A song about substance abuse. Even though I am the only straight edge member in this band and by no means want to come off as self-righteous, drunk or otherwise fucked up people who make a mess of things, start fights, whatever, can't count on my respect.

Stay On Top This one's about someone who's basically an asshole, but tries to hold on to a time when people around him still thought he was okay.

Put Down My Foot At times I disgust myself by not putting enough effort into something, basically running away from responsibilities and such. So I try to tell myself to fucking do what I have to do.

Your Life Inspired by soccer hooligans and everyone else who picks fights for fun. I can do without juvenile shit like that.

Give us a bit of an insight into your skate collection...

Oh man...well, I basically only collect late 80's Santa Cruz skateboards with art by Jim Phillips, I have 30 of those fuckers up on my walls right now, most in unused condition... I'm also halfway through getting sleeved out with SC artwork tattoos. My favorite deck I have is, oddly, my only non-SC deck: a Sims Kevin Staab mini model, which was my first ever professional skateboard, plus the graphics fucking rule: it has a parrot on a pirate ship with, of course, a pirate, and a shark in the water. My fave video of all time is hard to say...on the ND 7" we put a few samples from the SC classic 'streets on fire'... but Blind 'video days' is amazing too, also Bones Brigade video's... sheer genius... my fave ever skate shoes are probably Airwalk prototypes in red/black/white, I found a pair at an old surfing shop years ago, but they are a size men's 4... sucks!

I understand you're into art as well, what specifically are you into?

I've always been drawing stuff for as long as I can remember, and I graduated from art school 5 years ago. Lately I've been doing tons of stuff like shirt and record designs and whatnot, and tons of flyers for shows. Obviously, to me, HC and skating and their visual aspects (artwork) all tie in together, to me, it's all one thing, it's all self expression, it's what I know and love. My fave artists include Jim Phillips, who did all stuff for Santa Cruz skateboards... VC Johnson, who did all the stuff for Powell Peralta skateboards... Sean Taggart, who did tons of stuff for NYHC bands... too many to mention really, but those dudes stick out.

Is the song "Your life" about any particular football hooligans?

Well, I'm not into soccer really, and when I see shit on TV about rioting, and just plain stupidity, it gets on my nerves. To me it's like the embodiment of everything I despise in the real world: conformity and stupidity. I got into HC for a reason, and that reason being that I never fit in with shit like that, same goes for being straight edge of course... the song is not about just football hooliganism per se though, it could also be about fighting at shows, or anywhere else for that matter... getting fucked up and causing trouble is just not my scene.

Tell me about the shows you've played to date...

Okay... we played a couple of shows so far... first time was a festival called light the fuse in Holland, we just jumped on the bill and played a few songs, which went over well, and we sold all 40+ demo's I brought to the show... first real show was with Knife Fight in Utrecht, which was weird, because there was a weird atmosphere there... club was really crowded, but kids just stood there during all the bands... we played tight though... after that we played with Knife Fight in Germany, which was cool, still no cover songs though... at our record release show, our drummer was on vacation, and our guitar player was sick, so we had to get a fill-in drummer and guitar player. Actually, the replacement guitar player had to learn the songs one hour before the show on an acoustic guitar, but we pulled it off, got some mosh too, and we played Raw Deal's 'wall of hate', which went over well. That show was with Mental by the way, awesome, awesome band. And, as I'm typing this, today we're playing with Mental in Amsterdam, which should be a fun time. We have plans on going to Germany and Switzerland early October and we're playing the infamous Ninja Fest in London, on Oct. 26! As far as covers go, I wanna do some unconventional stuff, like, there's this old Screeching Weasel song I wanna do, I wanna do Bad Religion songs... today we're playing 'guilty of being white' by Minor Threat... cover songs are always tricky, because you wanna play something that you are into, but also something that will go over real well with the crowd too.

Anything else you'd like to talk about??

I guess one thing I'd like to address is gossip and hearsay... for some reason I am confronted with this shit now more than ever, and all I can say is: think for yourself... if you have problems with someone, confront them and find out what's going on. Chances are, shit got blown way out of proportion. Nuff said.

What are your thoughts on the recent YOT reunions and some of the others happening throughout the world lately ie. Insted, Mouthpiece...

Touchy subject, because when I look at the Insted reunion for instance, I'm fucking stoked about that, and I might actually go to Providence to catch their set there. As for Mouthpiece, I don't know, Tim McMahon already did those Hands Tied reunions... and when HT played Europe they played a MP song live... to me it just seems like it won't be the last reunion for any of his bands, and while those shows will be good fun for all those involved, it doesn't really work for me, even though I love MP. Then, YOT...different story. Ray Cappo sang for a very, very outspoken straight edge band at one time, turned Krsna, turned surfer dude, broke edge... whatever... and then he does reunion after reunion with YOT, and fucking plays shows under that name with non straight edge members in his band... and while it's true that Kevinsted is no longer edge, Insted never was JUST all about sxe like YOT was. It just seems like a joke, and while I'm not the one to question one's sincerity, I mean, it's not my band after all, I just feel it's ridiculous.

The Fast Fury of [REDACTED] 'I heard my ribs

Gimme a little history of the band, don't spare any details...

OK here's all the gory details. So after Steve had finished No Justice, he was looking to start a new band (his last, he says, but we'll see about that). He and I had been talking about doing a band for a bit and eventually we got together to bang out some songs that he had written. Anyways, after we had a few songs down, we picked up my friend and roommate Jewdickee, or Eric or whatever you wanna call him, on bass and pretty much straightened out most of the songs we now play. From there, we started thinking about who would sing, but the problem was we couldn't think of anyone in the DC area that wasn't already in a band and that would be aggro enough to be our front man. So eventually we started tossing around the idea of Steve singing and then employed our friend John of The Aftermath to play guitar and see how it sounded. Anyways, we heard Steve sing and it seemed about right to us and shortly thereafter we played our first show in my basement.

How have you been received in your home DC/MD/VA area? What type of reaction did you get to the demo?

We're lucky to have a pretty solid following in DC. Though we haven't played out too much, I would say all our best shows have been here or in Virginia Beach. In DC for some reason not that many people go to shows on the whole, unlike a lot of places in the states where 2 or 3 hundred people will show up to any given hardcore show. But we seem to do pretty well I think mainly because we attract an equal mix of punk and hardcore kids at our shows, which makes it a lot more fun than if it was just a bunch of hardcore kids waiting for the breakdown so they can mosh. And besides, in my book, punks and hardcore kids should be going to shows together anyways. But the demo itself did pretty well. We first made 200 and word spread pretty quick, mainly I think, due to people hearing it was ex No Justice, and so quite soon I was getting emails from all over requesting it, and we made another 100, which took a bit longer to get rid of cause we don't play out of town that much. In fact, I still have a few demos around here somewhere.

Why did you record the 7" tracks at the same time as the demo?

Well for anyone who doesn't know us, this is a highly dysfunctional band. Everyone is either very busy or in another band or both, so for us to have made it into the studio, it was probably best for us to just record all the tracks at once and be done with it. Plus, we used two of the songs on the demo for the 7" so it didn't really make sense for us to record three songs once and four shortly thereafter.

Do you find it hard establishing yourself in an area with such a rich hardcore history? What have previous bands in your area done for you both in and out of 86 Mentality?

No, not really, since DC nowadays is quite a small scene. I mean, 10 years ago you could expect 300+ kids at any given show, but now it's quite a bit smaller. So if you attend shows in DC and you have any idea of what's going on, you will definitely know what bands are good or upcoming. In that way, it's not difficult to have people take notice if you're a good band. However, in terms of standing up to the classic DC bands like The Faith or Minor Threat, well that's obviously a different story. But I do think that some of the really outstanding bands of the 90's like Worlds Collide and Damnation and Battery were just as amazing in their own scene, and in the late 90's and early millennium, the same goes for Striking Distance, so there certainly is a lot of well-documented history that can make it hard to live up to the standards many people attribute to DC hardcore bands. On the other hand, in many ways it's a good thing. People outside of DC seem to really like the idea of DC bands, though maybe in their mind DC hardcore isn't quite in line with the city's actual scene. But as far as playing out of town goes, it is nice to be identified with such a progressive and historical hardcore tradition. And that's why so many current DC bands use traditional DC hardcore imagery like the x's and bars flag or classic photos. Because as small as the hardcore scene might be right now, those early bands, whether or not we ever saw them, left a lot of good music and continue to influence newer bands.

Do you think some of the bands in your area are sold short because of location or sometimes don't get the wrap they deserve? Striking Distance for example...

Well yes and no. There are some really great bands in DC that probably will never get much love outside the Beltway, but I'm sure that goes for a lot of cities. In fact, I think it was Felix Havoc who wrote a while ago about how many good bands have been overlooked because of their location or because there wasn't a scene where they were to hype them and spread the word elsewhere. I mean that's why DRI left Texas, cause they knew they couldn't be the band they wanted to be there and I'm sure that sort of thing happens all over the world everyday. But as far as SD goes, I think they certainly left their mark. They were able to go on numerous US tours and play Europe, so I don't think they ever suffered in any way due to their location. However, on the flip side of things, there are probably also lots of undeserving bands that get really popular simply because they come from a famous town or a hyped scene and therefore get attention that a band from an average place would never receive.

What's the deal with your previous bands and has this helped or hindered any 86 Mentality progress?

Well Steve played guitar for No Justice, which definitely helped in terms of getting people to give us a chance. Unlike some bands who are great but don't have any hype around their previous bands or aren't scenester enough to have the hook up, we were really lucky to have the x-No Justice tag, almost to a point where I think we are a little spoiled, since we don't go out and play nearly as much as some of the really hard-working bands that have to fight for shows. So yes it was incredibly helpful to have people who liked No Justice check us out.

For anyone who hasn't heard 86 Mentality, how would you describe your sound and the band in general?

We are four incompetent, disorganized nogoodniks who happen to play early 80's inspired hardcore. Don't expect any New Balances or chugga chugga buildups in our songs.

Who are some upcoming and current bands from both in and outside of DC that we should look out for???

There are quite a few cool bands in the DC area right now. First and foremost I think is Never Enough from Baltimore. They've been together for at least two years now and play really straight ahead, sincere hardcore with no gimmicks or bullshit trends. They tour constantly and put out an amazing demo in 2003 so its really shocking to me that they aren't more popular in the US. But I expect a lot of people to check them out now that they've just released their first 7" called "Our Will is Done." there's also a cool scene going on in Virginia Beach, where a bunch of younger kids have been doing bands recently, such as Iron Boots and Tarpit. On the DC side of things, there's also plenty of great bands to check out. First there's the Aftermath who are coming out with a full length soon on our label, Grave Mistake Rec's. A couple of us did backups for it recently and believe me, its sick. Sort of like a Madball/Sheer Terror thing crossed with some classic DC hardcore, definitely pick this up. But as far as newer bands go, there are our friends Turning Seasons, who are a bunch of older dudes who totally rip and have a full-length coming out soon, and their guitarist's other band, the Hate Crimes. Don't let the name fool you, they put on a great show and their upcoming 7" will be generating quite a bit of attention I think because its so right on. Then there's Anger Battery, which is the newest DC straight edge outfit featuring members of Crime Spree, Desperate Measures and The First Step, who play a more melodic kind of hardcore and have a really good demo out now. And last but not least, one of my favorites Bail Out! who play a really unique mix of thrashy skate core with goofy lyrics about skate zombies and egging people's houses. They've got a split with Baltimore's The Spark coming out in a month or two so look for that also.

Why isn't 86 Mentality playing Hellfest this year??!

Like I said before, we don't do the New Balance mosh-core thing. It just isn't our scene. And besides, those kids wouldn't want us there anyways.

What's the craziest show you've ever attended?

Besides No Justice shows, what other memorable core-related occasions come to mind? Well No Justice shows just for their pure insanity value were obviously the best, but other than that I would say the craziest show I've ever been at was a DC show at Chamber of Sound in either 96 or 97 (I'm 22 so this was around when I first started attending real hardcore shows) with Damnation AD, Floorpunch, Hand Tied and Better Than A Thousand (their first show). As you can imagine people came out of the woodwork for this event and I can firmly say I've never seen kids piled so high before in my life. When BT1K played and did the YOT covers, this club which had really high ceilings was piled up to the rafters. At the time I was way into the punk rock thing, and even though I liked Minor Threat and other seminal hardcore, this was really new and shocking to me (not to mention a little frightening). I remember being so pumped for days afterwards in pure disbelief of what I saw.

What's the deal with your tour with Belgium's Dead Stop? How and who hooked it up? Is this your first real touring outside of the DC/MD/VA area??

Yeah this is our first real tour aside from a couple of weekends here and there. What happened was that I had read that Dead Stop was going on tour in the US and Gord from Deranged Records, who put out their LP in North America, was looking for someone to tour with them. I had already been speaking with Gord for a bit and so I asked him if they were still looking for someone to tour with and so he just hooked the two bands up. It was pretty lucky for us cause I think the bands complement one another, but also because we'd been hearing the craziest stories about their live shows from our friend Dave Byrd from when Striking Distance played with them in Belgium. But anyways, Gord is a busy guy so I've been mainly handling the tour along with the help of some friends and we're all really excited to get out of DC for a bit.

Many reviews have mentioned an Oi influence in your sound... how and why do you think this is?

You know, I never really heard that much of it aside from on the song "Total Hate" but Steve's vocals are a little more oi-like than most hardcore vocals, so I guess I see it. Steve also writes the songs and he's real into oi/streetspunk bands so I'm sure that added into his songwriting. In fact, I was talking with someone the other day who was noting how much of an oi influence Negative Approach had and its true. But I think its due to genres not being as broken down or boxed in during their time that you still rarely hear people refer to NA as an oi influenced hardcore band. They're just regarded by most as a seminal hardcore band and the oi part isn't usually touched upon. So I guess oi has its place in American hardcore whether you like it or not.

Shed some light on Jason Halal, who is he really? Any skeletons in the closet we should know about??!

Hmmm I've certainly never been asked this before. Well, I'm 23, born and raised in Washington DC, I like European horror films, good literature, bicycles and... yeah that's about it. Or at least as much as you wanna hear. As for skeletons... well I am going to see Morrissey next week with my girlfriend and I'm pretty psyched about that so maybe that says something about me. I dunno.

What's the best piece of advice anyone has ever given you?

I'm not sure what particular piece of advice it was but it undoubtedly came from Alex Dimatessa and Rich Miles, who put out our record on Grave Mistake. Ever since we decided to do this record, they've 100% there to help us make decisions, book shows and lend their support. Best dudes ever.

What's your best memory of 86 Mentality to date? Anything you'd really like to achieve with the band??

Well, considering we haven't really played too many shows, I'll just say the best memories are the shows we've played in DC to our friends and with our friends' bands. Playing with bands like the Aftermath and Striking Distance's last show really mean a lot to me. It also feels good to have put out a good record that, while it isn't comparable to any of the great old DC bands, still has its place in history and continues the DC hardcore tradition. That probably makes me happier than any particular show experience could. As far as achieving anything, our goals aren't too lofty. I think we all just want to play aggro music. Rowdy shows, people having fun, no drama, just kids jumpin all over the place. That's all I care about really and I think that's the same with the rest of the guys.

What do you personally think about the whole sex metal/trustkill/adams family/hot topic bullshit in relation to hardcore?

Sex metal? Jeez, I must not be up on my game, apparently I missed that one. You know, I obviously dislike that whole scene of commercial, shitty metallic "hardcore" that trustkill puts out but unfortunately, when I look at hardcore kids I often see the same commodity-driven bullshit that a place like hot topic wants to sell you. For example, when I went to Positive Numbers this year, which was my first and last time, I was really disgusted by it. I have no doubt that there are plenty of cool, sincere kids that were there. But just the herd mentality and eagerness of everyone to eat up the new trendy bands and get every single color of every limited edition Posi numbers pressing of every stupid band that will never mean anything really destroyed it for me. I mean, I had known in one way or another that hardcore is just a condensed, DIY marketing scene with people promoting their products and consumers buying into the new trends, etc. but being there that day just crystallized it for me. That for all the talk, most hardcore kids just love to buy into the hype. I mean, I know I'm just as guilty as many of these kids, because I can also be swayed by trends, but I guess its just sad that hardcore itself is in many ways no better than the white belts everyone loves to hate. Now this doesn't mean that I'm not pumped about alot of good music that's coming out right now and that there aren't plenty of awesome kids and bands that are doing hardcore for all the right reasons, but when it comes to the larger scheme of things, I just don't want to be a part of the group. I mean, I'm into hardcore, but I really just don't like hardcore kids on the whole. Like Steve from Town of Hardcore says, "love the music, hate the kids."

Anything you want to add that I may have forgotten or any last words??

Not really. We're working on some material for the new 7" that oughta be recorded in late 2004, so keep your eyes peeled for a new record shortly thereafter. And come check us and Dead Stop out on tour if you're in the East Coast, Midwest or Canada. Thanks for the interview Dave!!

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♠ RIGHT ♠ BRIGADE

What do you think of Right Brigade now that you look back on it?

Right Brigade was a band that had a lot of good times and wrote great music. RB also had a lot of bad times as well. We all worked except for Jesse, plus the fact that Mick and I lived in Connecticut while everyone else was in Boston. Jesse would want us to play a show like on a Thursday in Cleveland and get pissed because we couldn't play it. Jesse's status in the scene made his head a little big.

Why didn't Mick, Pat, Josh and yourself continue once Jesse left? There were definitely a lot of kids into RB...

The four of us did continue to play, but it wasn't hardcore at all, we were getting worn out. But the bottom line is that Pat and I went to school, Mick was in the army and had to go to Bosnia for a year, and Josh joined American Nightmare. It's not easy to make a living in hardcore in the USA, so the rent has to get paid somehow.

What are the others and yourself up to nowadays?

Everyone is doing well: Jesse - still in Boston - managing a company and lifting weights - don't know if he's in a band. Pat - lives in Brooklyn - graphic designer and getting his masters in art - always playing and writing music, but solo now. Mick - living in Connecticut - engaged - runs his own well drilling company, him and I play once and a while. Josh - living in Boston - played with AN/GUTG for a few years and now is in a great band called Head Automatica with the guys from Glass Jaw - they're on Warner Bros. Records. He only wears vintage clothes. Myself - I'm a photographer living in Connecticut, I'm playing with Matt McIntosh from Eventide/Hatebreed, the band is called Dearly Beloved. We're just getting the ball rolling so look out for us this summer.

What about the looped guitar tracks on the LP, was this part of the growth or progression of the band or another idea to add to the mix?

We just did that to piss people off. Fuck the kids. (There is a great part after that loop).

I kinda get the feeling there's still some tension or bad blood between some of you so can I assume there will never be another reunion? What was the deal with the reunion you played?

The reunion consisted of the two guys (Jesse, Clevo) that never contributed anything musically to RB and a few hacks. The rest of us found out about the "reunion" a few weeks after it happened. People told me it was the worst thing they had ever seen.

What are your thoughts on the demo, 7"/CDEP and the LP?

I know a lot of people dissed the LP but it's not too far removed from the older song writing at all...

As with any type of music, the longer you play, the more you progress and mature within that style. We were all hardcore kids. So the demo and the EP were influenced by traditional hardcore records. The LP was written later on after RB had been around for a while and had gone through some line up changes, the tone of the band changed a little. We wrote an LP that we wanted to write. I (we) didn't give a fuck about how the public took it. When Jesse was sleeping in the van, the Beatles would get put in the radio. When you play hardcore, most of the time it's the last thing you listen to on your own, if you do at all. We're very proud of everything we wrote and put out. I think the LP is great - and yes, "fuck the kids" means what it says.

Is there anything you would have changed or maybe done differently?

Never of let Clevo in the band, made Jesse write his own lyrics, got Wes from American Nightmare/Give Up The Ghost to sing after Jesse quit.

After the LP dropped, did you play any shows? Were there any new tracks written after this?

No shows were played to promote the LP. I'll be honest, I wish that we did. Oh well, fuck the kids.

Did you have a favourite show or favorite place to play? Fondest memory of RB?

Our first show was at the Tune Inn in New Haven, CT. That is one of the best clubs I've ever played. Favorite show was in Wilkes Barre, PA at the "home base". We played their annual "posi fest" one summer and everybody went nuts. Chris Wrenn from Bridge Nine Records made us a huge banner to go behind me on stage. There's footage of that show floating around the internet somewhere. Funny memory - Pat and I going to Jesse's apartment in Boston to get him to come to the studio to do vocals for the LP. Clevo and him lived together, so I can understand the tension, but if Clevo knew how to play bass, we wouldn't of kicked him out. That was funny.

If there was something you want people to know about RB that you may not have mentioned, go for it...

Even with the ups and downs, RB was a great time in my life. I was making music with great people. The last thing we wanted to do was jump on the hardcore bandwagon and write generic songs. There were different versions of many songs before we had the final ones, we loved everything we wrote and recorded. Our music came from our experiences and our emotions, not that part in that Cro-Mags song. If you didn't like the LP (many people didn't), sorry, go buy a Thursday record. Support people and bands that have heart (i.e. Chris Wrenn /Bridge Nine Records and Give Up The Ghost), not cool tattoos. Thanks to everyone, and no, there will be no reunion.

JOHN SCHARBACH

BREAKTHROUGH AND TFS SHIRT CONNOISSEUR

Breakthrough

The first band I have been really involved in and released anything with. Izz and I just got together and created our own brand of straight edge hardcore. Have only released a demo so far, which you can get for free from me. Just send your address to johnoftoday@hotmail.com. I am really proud of this band and am very happy to be doing it with good friends.

Stagedives

Probably the funnest physical activity of seeing a live band. I prefer stage diving over moshing, but both are a good time. I definitely think there is an art to stage diving, and you either have it or you don't. At my very first show with a stage at some bar in North Carolina, I was watching this band and all I wanted to do was stage dive. Not too many people there, maybe five up front. But I was still trying to stage dive and just ended up eating the floor every time. If I had to pick one of my favorite stage divers right now, it would definitely be Jon "Minnie Stigma" Scovitch. That kid has an awesome style, can jump high, and lands every dive he attempts with ease. I've thought many times about creating some sort of "stage dive practice arena" with a stage and foam bodies on springs in front of it.

Schism

A record label where I can honestly say I appreciate and enjoy every release. The fanzine is legendary in it's own right, and the shirts are nothing less than amazing. I always think to myself how cool it would have been if they would have kept up with the label. The Beyond record, the compilation, and the Alone In A Crowd ep. What would an AIAC schism shirt have looked like? On that note, what if Bold would have released Speak Out on Wishingwell and printed up some 4-sided shirts. The only thing I can say bad about skiz is that I've heard stories (second hand info here) that the mail order was a little hit or miss.

1997

I got into hardcore in 1998, so I just missed the boat. Listening to the Misfits and skateboarding was my main focus in life in 1997. But looking back on 97 through records, pictures, fanzines, video's etc... It seemed like an awesome era. It seems like people are always comparing what we have now with the past, and always commenting on how the past was so much better. People are going to be doing that with the "2004 era" five and ten years from now. Things have changed, but I totally appreciate what is going on now. This time is special because it's mine.

The First Step

I don't even know where to begin when talking about this band. I have kept my eyes on this band since the beginning and could fire off a ton of stories. I'll reminisce with one... I remember when all of us still lived in North Carolina and the band first started coming together. I was hanging at my girlfriend's house one night and Steve stops by with a practice tape. It had three roughly recorded songs without vocals. What I was hearing were the songs we have come to know and love (We all die, As it is, and The first step). I remember Steve talking about the lyrics and what he was going to say here, the delivery there, etc. I distinctly remember him explaining the part in the song "The First Step"... "Right here dude, it's going to be like... The!... First!... Step!" I was stoked out of my mind and after that it was a lot of nights driving around Fayetteville blasting that tape just dreaming of what would come about. Great band and even better bro's.

95 Air Max

One of my favorite sneakers. The neon green/grey color scheme can't be beat in my eyes. I like most of the other colors too. I remember when these first came out while I was in 6th grade, I thought they were the ugliest, stupidest shoes I had ever seen. I couldn't understand how someone could buy a neon green shoe... what was Nike thinking? Now I think they are an absolute masterpiece in sneaker design.

Australia

Really intriguing. Was always one of those places I wanted to visit. When you're a kid, the whole "boomerang and kangaroo" thing was really interesting. I still don't know much about the culture other than the misleading stereotypes... Hopefully I can make it out there sometime.

Reunions (particularly recent reunions)

Insted

Now this reunion is the one I was most excited for and I believe it was done with the utmost integrity. I remember when talk first arose about Insted maybe playing some shows... I got a call from my friend Aaron and he said he had caught wind of Insted maybe playing some shows to support the discography. I had Kevinsted's phone number from doing the interview in Nothing can compare fanzine, and decided to go straight to the source. Granted I wasn't best friends with the guy, I figured I could still call him up and ask him if there was any truth to what we were hearing. So I present the rumor to Kev and he says it's news to him. The idea seemed to sound good though I guess and he started asking me if Insted did play...how would people react, and did I think it was a good idea. I told him that I thought that reunions could work if he did it right. I attended two of the three East coast shows (New Jersey and New York), and let me tell you... simply awesome. Insted just looked really happy to be playing the shows. I had a blast at both shows and I know a lot of other people did to. Seeing them play, it didn't seem like a reunion... it just seemed like this new awesome band playing. I think they really set a high standard for the way reunions should be.

Youth Of Today

Now this is a reunion I had mixed feelings about. I had of course heard all the rumors of them getting paid an absurd amount of money to do the shows. They did put on a good show and I had a lot of fun. It seems to me like Porcell still loves playing music and still supports straight edge. I'm not sure what Ray or Sammy is up to. I just wish they would start a new band, or bring some new ideas. Youth Of Today happened at a certain point in time, and at a certain point in their lives, things have changed and you can't recreate it. I still have a lot of respect for them, and their impact on my life cannot be denied. I just hope their hearts were in the right place.

Mouthpiece/Hands Tied

Although now it seems they have played quite a few reunions, I don't think it has tarnished their past. I am friendly with Tim and it's easy to tell that he just genuinely loves playing hardcore (along with the other members). He really believes in what he is saying/has said and his intentions are 100% honorable in my opinion. He isn't looking to make money, he isn't looking for status, he just wants to have fun and make an impact. You don't have to take my word for it though, talk to the man himself.

Wishingwell

Another great record label coming out of the west. Had a lot more releases than I can keep up with, but we all know the basics, which is more than enough reason to dub this label classic. You've got "Screaming for change", "Break down the walls", "Bonds of friendship" and "Power of expression" just to name a few. Plus that Unity 7". I don't know if it gets any better than "straight on view". From the clothing standpoint (how could you talk about Wishingwell and not mention the shirts!), I personally think Wishingwell had cooler looking shirts than Schism. A good number of them were 4-sided, they had cool/unique color schemes, and that logo with the well over a record is just so awesome. Also, having quotes/lyrics on a sleeve of a shirt is a great idea and I wish more bands did that today. My all time favorite shirt was produced by Wishingwell. The 4-sided "Break down the walls" design for Youth of Today. An X'ed Fist on the front, cover pic from the record on the back and "Wake up and live" on the sleeve with the record logo on the other sleeve. I can't comprehend a cooler design. As far as business practices go... I've heard some really sketchy stories through the years. I wonder what the "Speak out" layout would have looked like on Wishingwell. Would it still have been gatefold?

PMA

Awesome song and an awesome way to live your life. I don't adhere to a strict code of positivity or anything, but I always try to have a good attitude and look on the bright side of things. Sometimes easier said than done I know!

Fanzines

I never really got into collecting records, but I am totally into collecting fanzines. Nothing beats a well laid out zine, with good pictures and interesting writing/interviews. Fanzines seem to be making a comeback lately. I've gotten a lot of good ones in the past couple of months. If you haven't already, try to get your hands on Start today #4, Send in the clones #4, Speak for yourself #2, Town of hardcore #8, Bench press #1, and Back to back #1. I'm definitely forgetting some, but that should get you started. If someone is having trouble deciding between doing a paper zine and an on-line zine... do the paper zine!

STRAIGHT

This interview originally appeared in 'The Kids Will Have Their Say' #1 by Shortfuse Records CEO, Clint Chapman.

Yeah that's right, a Straight Ahead interview. Clint snuck backstage at one of the Sick Of It All shows at The Annandale last Easter and harassed Craig Setari (ex straight Ahead, Youth of Today, Agnostic Front, etc.) and Armand Majidi (ex-Straight Ahead, Rest In Pieces). Straight Ahead were a legendary mid 80's NYHC band that played pure fast and furious hardcore in an era when most bands were crossing over to metal or bad rock. They also kept their message positive and straight from the heart and to this day I can't listen to the Straight Ahead record without moshing it up around my bedroom. " SPIRIT... OF... YOUTH!!!"

Armand - What do you want to do a Straight Ahead interview for?

Clint - People don't know much about Straight Ahead! So firstly what got you interested in hardcore and how old were you when you 'discovered' hardcore?

Craig - I got into hardcore when I was about... how old was I? A - Oh, about 14. C - 14, yeah when I started getting into it, and what got me into it was like, I was into aggressive music, like early metal stuff. I was like 6 when I got into Black Sabbath, I'd never heard music like that. It really interested me, really sparking something in me, you know. So I was always seeking out different music. My brother would bring records home and I'd listen to them, so my early influences were whatever my brother brought home, which was like a lot of British heavy metal, Black Sabbath and then he started bringing home Motorhead records. A - We all have a debt to repay to our older brothers, cause' my older brother got into punk/HC a little bit before I did, he was like one year ahead of me. C - My brother was never really into HC really or punk, it was more like I tried to turn him onto it later as I got older. Once I got old enough to get a little money, I'd go out and buy my own records. I started seeking the stuff out. A kid I went to school with gave me an old Mob 7" and I listened to it and really liked it. C - What, 'Upset

and some guy on drums, the guy who played in the Motorhead cover band. This is the early formative years. We never did any shows, but we had a bunch of songs and we used to rehearse in Rob's basement. From there we could never get a good drummer, cause' the one guy kept quitting on us. What I did was, I joined this band called NYC Mayhem with Tommy, who later sung for Straight Ahead, and this guy Gordon. We played a bunch of shows at CBGB's and a bunch of shows in Jersey. A - Rob to this day doesn't forgive Craig for leaving Schmegma (laughing). It's like one of those things, I mean he's still my friend and I love him but he'll always be "oh you sold me out" but really... C - Could have been big! C - Yeah, either that or stopped altogether. NYC Mayhem played a bunch of shows, with like the Psychos, COC around '85. C - Did you record a demo? C - We did two demos, one of which was going to be on a 7" on Urinal Records, who put out Mental Abuse. But the label folded right as our 7" was gonna come out, so it never came out. Then NYC Mayhem broke up.

the System'? C - I forgot which one, either 'Upset...' or 'Step Forward'. I don't remember to tell you the truth. That's pretty much it, but when I was like 13 or 14, I played in a band and we did Motorhead covers and all bad covers like that. We had a couple of songs. Armand, Pete and Lou came to the show, it was the first show I ever played in my life and they were friends with the drummer, and I guess that's how I got hangin' out with these guys. A - They asked me to play guitar. C - Yeah, we asked him but he wouldn't do it. A - I was too stuck up! C - You didn't like them or... ? A - I didn't like the music they were playing at the time. I was getting heavily into Discharge and more extreme stuff and they were only doing like Motorhead covers. I was trying to get more and more extreme. C - Like spikes and shit? A - I did have spiky hair for a month, but I got sick of it. It's too hard to maintain. C - Doing your hair is a waste of time! A - Yeah, I mean waking up with stuff on your pillow is disgusting! Actually I used to be a long hair, in high school and that. After I joined a hardcore band I went straight to a shaved head. I was sick of long hair. C - He was a dirty fuck too, his hair was really greasy. A - I had long hair like Lemmy from Motorhead. I definitely wasn't a pretty boy. C - Not pretty! A - I'm a lot prettier now. C - What was the first HC band you were involved in? C - Alright, I was in a band called Schmegma with Rob, who later played guitar for Straight Ahead and Helmet, he's in Biohazard now. Him, me, and Richie, who played bass in Sick Of It All, he was the other guitarist,

We wanted Tommy to sing, cause' Tommy was playing drums and singing for NYC Mayhem. It was a three piece and I sang too. We wanted Tommy to sing, be a front man. We had this idea to start a new band, I was gonna play bass, Tommy sing, and I knew Rob from Schmegma. He was a rally good guitar player and a nice guy too. So we were telling Armand how we wanted to start a new band and he said he'd play drums. He'd never played drums before, this is when he first played drums. We tried it and within two or three practices he knew how to play drums good enough to be in a band. Right after that, a few months later, SOIA were starting up. A - Hey wait, let me soup myself up here a little. Like the sixth time I sat down behind a drum set to play was our first show together. C - We had five practices... A - So we played a show out on Long Island first, as kind of a warm up, then our next show was at CB's with The Mob, and that was after maybe another four practices. So we played CB's, after only 10 practices, like the tenth time I ever sat down behind a drum set. I'm kinda proud of that. I mean looking back at old videos I like to surprise myself. We had a good concept of how to play together. C - It came off pretty fast, cause' he'd never played before. We played out as Straight Ahead. We did a bunch of shows with all the New York bands, we were starting to get popular. In NY people were saying Agnostic Front (when they were going metal), well, AF were moving on, and Straight Ahead were going to be the new band in hardcore. What came after this was I made the mistake of joining Youth Of Today. Tommy joined YOT also, he went back to playing drums. So Armand concentrates on Rest In Pieces, Rob also joined RIP, and Tommy and I are joined Youth Of Today. C - So Straight Ahead got

AHEAD

pushed aside? C - Yeah, lay dormant for a while, and eventually Tommy and I quit Youth Of Today, the only band I ever quit in my life was Youth Of Today, never quit any other band. **C - A bad experience with Youth Of Today?** C - Ah not a good one, not necessarily that bad, but not good. Not my kind of people. Not to insult them, a different sort of outlook, different lifestyles. I'm more for live and let live, they are more for "I'll tell you what to do". That's not what hardcore is to me. But eventually when we quit Youth Of Today, we tried to reform Straight Ahead. You were into it, right Armand? **A - What? Reform Straight Ahead?** The reunion shows, stuff like that? Yeah, they were good shows. **C - He was into it, but Rob wasn't really.** **A - At that point everybody was into it, like the first Straight Ahead reunion show was the first time any of us experienced playing a show which was packed out, and everybody went off for it. Like the whole damn floor at CB's was just like an insane reaction.** **C - At that time everybody knew who Straight Ahead were, knew all the lyrics, even though we'd stopped playing for a while. People liked us, it was a hardcore band. Everybody was turning metal back then, and Straight Ahead were a straight up hardcore band, fast short songs, sing-a-longs, and good dance parts. You know, everything. Then what happened was, after a bunch of reunion shows, at this time we had peaked and people were really excited about it, and we just broke up.**

Tommy was starting to act crazy, and Rob didn't want to do it anymore. We just didn't get along. It got weird, so we totally stopped doing it. **A - The main reason was Tommy went from being this straight edge guy then he got into reggae, and the next thing you know, he's a white Rastafarian! All of a sudden, he wanted the message of the band not to carry a straight edge kind of message, but to carry a Rasta theme. Then he started changing the lyrics of the songs to include "I and I" and maybe not the word "Jah", but he might as well have said it.** **C - It got a little away from what we were, no one was happy.** **A - Far away from what we were. He even changed his vocal style so drastically that he was into H.R (from the Bad Brains) at that point that he was letting the influence go too far, and he went right off the deep end. To the point that he wasn't even singing anymore, he was just making sound effects.** **C - Not original?** **A - He**

was kinda original... **C - Before then he had his own style which was good. The early stuff was better I thought.** **C - So were all the Straight Ahead members straight edge at the time?** **C - No, no. When Straight Ahead first started, I was drinking and smoking pot everyday. Tommy was the only one into the straight edge thing. Tommy was really into straight edge, and what happened was, I joined Youth Of Today, and it was good. Hanging out with those guys, I stopped getting high, cause' I was getting high like consistently. When I was a kid, I was really into drugs, y'know? I've gotta say one good thing about the Youth Of Today thing, it got me clean from getting high. Cleaned me up. I guess I jumped on the whole straight edge trend for a while, but when I was out of the band I gave up the straight edge thing, but the effects of cleaning myself out worked. I wasn't into drugs anymore, the good part rubbed off on me, but not the fanatical part. Every now and then I drink, but 2 months ago I stopped drinking altogether, cause' it makes you feel like shit. I'm getting older man!**

C - So when was the 'Breakaway' 12" EP recorded? **C - That was spring '87.** **A - That was like after the reunion.** **C - Like original reunion. We did a few reunion shows just recently, like two months ago. Like I'll call up Tommy, "There's a benefit show, we'll do like two songs cause' there's a CD coming out". It's not quite the same. We're a very energetic live band, and we influenced a lot of bands. Straight Ahead had a very big influence on Sick Of It All, A lot of what SOIA is today, was influenced by Straight Ahead. I mean, obviously Armand and I were in Straight Ahead, but Pete and Lou were the biggest Straight Ahead fans out of anybody. At our first show they were like, Pete, Lou, and a couple of the Alleyway guys, they were the guys who were dancing and singing along, cause' they were the guys who knew all the lyrics. We were all friends.** **C - What did**

Straight Ahead end up recording? **C - 'End the Warzone' 7".** **C - And how did that come about?** **C - Tommy hooked up with that kid, Mike Rubenstein. We recorded 12 songs for it, only 9 of them were put on, so the other 3 songs are gonna be on the CD I'm doing. Armand, did he pay for the recording?** **A - Like \$350 for recording, sent me some vinyl, never paid us anything.** **C - What else?** **A - Don Fury demos.** **C - Don Fury, nobody knows about that.** **A - Those are the ones where Tommy doesn't really sing words, he just makes "eyah" noises.** **C - And live, well the problem with the live stuff is Tommy never really sings, he'd just go crazy and throw the mic down, so when you watched us play it was fuckin' great. He'd be doing flips into the crowd, but if you listened to it, he's not singing, I'm barely playing bass, but when you see it, it's fuckin' insane.** **A - Kinda like**

Krakdown, they had the same thing goin' on. **C - Not very good on record but really good live.** **A - Live they were untouchable, but when you sit down and listen to a tape of them, it didn't really work.** **C - I think the Krakdown 7" is awesome. Sounds like early Toe To Toe!** **A - Yeah yeah, Toe To Toe remind me of that style, or even beyond that, early Cause For Alarm.** **C - Wait til' you hear the Krakdown thing I'm doing. It has like 45 minutes of music. I figure that and Straight Ahead on my label is a really good start. Fucking good classic hardcore bands. Here's the deal. I'm starting a label called Boulevard and I'm putting out a discography CD of all the Straight Ahead stuff that was ever done. So you'll be able to tell the older stuff to the later stuff. I'm also putting out a band called Krakdown, which is another old NYHC band. So they are the first two things on my label. After that, I'll see what happens, I have a few ideas.** **C - No NYC Mayhem?** **C - Just Straight Ahead, Mayhem I'm gonna leave alone cause' a lot of the Mayhem songs we used in Straight Ahead.** **C - On**

to Rest In Pieces. What happened with RIP? You put out 'My Rage' which is a fucking great record, but then... **A - (laughter) It went down hill! The second record was kind of an experiment that go put out. You know kind of got forced to put it out. None of us were really happy with the outcome, none of us liked it. At that point, we couldn't spend any more money to go back and make it better. I would have liked to go back and do a shitload of vocal tracks, but at that point we had even taken more money from Roadrunner to finish the album up. We kept digging ourselves deeper into a hole.** **C - I played bass on that one.** **C - Who played drums?** **A - for the most part, I did, but that was unexpected because we had this drummer, Al Brand, the guy on 'My Rage', and he was a real wildcard. You'd never know whether he would play drums properly. Usually he would just kick up dirt behind his drum set, and we'd hope for the best!** **C - When we got into the studio, he couldn't play the songs good enough to be on the album, so we had to kick him out of the band, in the studio. Armand had to play drums, but he'd never played to those songs.** **A - It was fucked up. We had five days to record and mix for that record. What ended up happening was we devoted two days, in other words, \$3000**

into trying to get the drummer to play the songs. The one song he managed to kind of pull off was 'hooked up', and that version is on the record. But then I had to sit down, and learn how to play drums for the rest of the album. **C - On the spot.** **A - And record it with these guys!** **C - So it was a rehearsal/recording at the same time, it's crazy.** **A - The whole thing got split up. We couldn't do the vocals up there in Normandy. If we had, the album would have been much better, we would've had a much better guitar sound, and things would have worked out a lot more like the Killing Time 'Brightside' LP. We ended up finishing it in this weird studio in Queens, even in the mix there were no effects we could put on anything.** **C - It was one of those things that just didn't happen.** **C - So how did Pushead come about doing the art for the record?** **C - You asked him!!!** **A - yeah, but I can't remember where I met him. I really don't remember where I met Pushead!** **C - That's probably the only reason I bought that record.** **A - Cause' of Pushead?** **C - Do you like it? You didn't like it did you?**

SPIRIT OF



C - No, I didn't like it. A - I don't blame you. C - I was more into 'balls n' all'!


A - (laughter) 'My Rage' is a good record, I like it. C - 'My Rage' is really good. C - **Is there any other good unreleased Rest In Pieces material?** A - Oh, other stuff? You should pick up the Blackout! CD if you can get your hands on it. It has shit that wasn't on the 7", but also a demo we recorded in '86. C - The demo's good. A - Some pretty hard shit. C - **So where to now? We did Straight Ahead, we did Rest In Pieces...** C - I guess onto Agnostic Front... C - Yeah, what happened was, after Straight Ahead broke up, rest In Pieces let me play as a second guitarist. I did that for a while, but I'm not a guitarist, I'm a bass player. I was very uncomfortable playing guitar, so after two shows I stopped playing. They said they didn't really need a second guitarist, they were just helping me out because they were my friends. I wasn't comfortable. I'd be more comfortable with a microphone in my hand, but bass is my thing. That was the first time I hadn't been in a band since I first started playing. So what happened was, ah, as soon as I stopped playing in Rest In Pieces, I got a call from Todd Youth of Murphy's Law and they were looking for a bass player. He's like, "Yo! You wanna be in Murphys Law?" I was like, great, I love Murphys Law. So I went down and played with them, and Chuck also tried out, God bless his soul. As soon as I got home from try out, I got a call from Stigma. Like when I was a kid, Vinnie would always pull me aside, when I was in NYC Mayhem, he'd say, "one day you're gonna be in my band, you're a good kid, I like you, you jump around, you got a lot of spirit." And I

would just giggle and say yeah, yeah. I was only a little kid. C - **That was like a dream!**

C - Yeah, more like a dream, cause Vinnie was into hardcore way before I was, so like, when I got into hardcore, Agnostic Front were my favourite band, total glory, 'Victim In Pain' era. So the minute I walked in the door, put 'Red' down (my bass), the phone rings, and Vinnie's like, "hey kid, you're in AF now!" Yeah, but I just tried out for Murphys Law. He was like, "don't worry, I'll call Jimmy, tell em' that they'll take Chuck and we're taking you." So Agnostic Front were on and off touring, so I was working like in between tours. Then Roger wanted to stop doing the band, cause' he had things to do. When Roger came back around, we started touring again and it was all good. Now AF were were like, this is our last tour, we're breaking up. Vinnie wanted to have a kid, everyone was tired, and Roger and Vinnie didn't want to do the band anymore. Right as AF was on it's last tour, Armand calls me up and was like, "Richie's leaving" (SOIA's bass player at the time). See how this is all interlocked? Armand's like, "we're going to Europe, we want you to do the tour". I was like,

well I don't know if I'll be in the band, but I'll do the tour, cause' at this time I wanted to go to school for cooking, be a chef. I was dating this girl, I'd been doing this for so long that I thought I wanted to try something different. Settle down, marry this girl and start a family. So I played this tour for SOIA, it was for a long time, and I liked it. But in my head, I was only going to do one tour and then settle down. But I like playing with these guys, it was spirited, it brought my spirit back. I could feel it coming back. During the last AF tour, I wasn't enjoying it. You know, you do something for so long, you take a look and say, "am I missing something?" It's like a crossroad in my life, I wanted to see how it was in the regular world... is this thing running out?? C - **We'll find out soon enough.** C - So I went to Europe a second time. I was living with this girl, but it wasn't working out. She was like, "I want you to marry me". Wanna do this, wanna do that, and in my heart, I love music. This is what I want to do. Make music. **HARDCORE.** This is what I am. I didn't even chase after it, it chased after me. I didn't ask to be in Agnostic Front. I didn't ask to be in Youth Of Today. All these bands asked me to join them. So all I was doing the whole while was doin' what I loved and what came naturally, playing hardcore. Being a part of this, the spirit of hardcore. So this girl is like, "I can't take it, you being on tour all the time". I was like, you know something, I wanna do music. So we broke up. And I loved this girl, but it was a good thing because it taught me that I was meant to do this. My life is hardcore. Cause' you get to reach out to people, get to do good things. I mean, hardcore had negative elements, but basically I've always been into positive hardcore, make people

feel good, open people up, help people out. I was hurt when I broke up with this girl, but it re-invented me in hardcore, made me feel like my soul came back to me, I can't explain it. It was like my second wave. It all came back to me. Luckily I checked out being a normal person for a while, and it wasn't for me. Settling down, I was bored to death. As much as I loved this girl, I was bored. Hardcore is in my blood. I can't shake it. It's what I am. I started playing again, been touring like crazy. The band got more popular, it just all fell together, and now things are really good. I love doing it. All I need is my Red (the bass), and a bunch of kids with heart and fire in their guts, and let's go! That's it. That's al you need.



February 2003 I was lucky enough to go on tour with Cro-Mags and although it wasn't the original line-up, it was the f'n Cro-Mags. Franklin Rhi was playing bass and was possibly the most quiet, chilled guy I've toured with. When we got onto the topic of NYHC, I knew I had to hear more so here it is, Franklin's two cents...

Whereabouts did you grow up? How did you get into hardcore?

I grew up in New York City. The neighborhood was Jackson Heights (in Queens). I ended up there when my parents got separated and it was the best thing to ever happen in my life. When I got there, my eyes were opened up to underground music scenes. There was a record store called Numbers and they had all kinds of records that other stores didn't have. Venom, Mercyful Fate, Warzone, Suicidal Tendencies, etc. I started out as a total metalhead (which I still am today). I started out with the usual. Motley Crue, Iron Maiden, etc., but I was looking for something harder and then I got into Metallica, Venom, Slayer, Kreator, Voivod, Exodus, etc. The thing is, I was one of those angry, big time troublemaker teenagers and I had a real attitude. Something different was needed. This was between 1984-1987. My first introduction to hardcore was in 1986. It was the Age of Quarrel. I was really big on metal mags at that time and Cro-Mags used to get a lot of coverage. I'd read the articles, read the interviews and look at the photos. They were the craziest bunch of people I ever saw. Tattoos, bald heads, going nuts on stage, it was an energy and vibe that the metal bands just didn't have. Soon to follow was Agnostic Front's Cause for Alarm. I was still really into mostly metal because I was 13 at the time and didn't really know about the gigs at the time. Then in 1988 I got the Revelation comp and that was it for me. I thought Sick of it All and Breakdown was the shit and that's where it all opened up for me. Jackson Heights became a mecca for hardcore at the time as well. I was in the right place at the right time. This is the neighborhood that gave birth to the DMS crew and I became friends with a lot of those guys. They got me into stuff like Bad Brains, Krakdown, Raw Deal, etc. This is also where a lot of NYHC bands lived. Sick of it All, Killing Time, Rest in Pieces, Gorilla Biscuits, they all lived in Jackson Heights at one time or another. If you were a hardcore kid, that was the place to be besides the Lower East Side.

What was your first hardcore band? How was it growing up in the late 80s NYHC scene?

My first hardcore band was Show of Force in 1990. It was with Mike Dijan (Breakdown, Crown of Thornz). I got in that band because the singer was in my math class and he asked me to come and jam and that was it. We disbanded because the singer overdosed. That band lead to a lot of other gigs. Afterwards, I played in Discipline/Ocean of Mercy, Crown of Thornz, 108, AngerMeans, Strife (as 2nd guitarist), and one other band... I forgot the name hahaha!!! As far as growing up in the late 80's with hardcore it was great! All the bands were at their peak. This was when Sick of it All only had a 7", Killing Time was still called Raw Deal, The Icemen were tearing it up, Cro-Mags were tearing up the world, it was still raw and NYHC was still underground and restricted to the U.S. for the most part. It was new, fresh and great! The thing is, I actually got more involved in the scene in 1990. You know, going to CBGB's, making a musical contribution to the scene, and hanging out at the shows. I only caught three hardcore shows in the late 80's. Cro-Mags at the Ritz in '88, SOIA in '89 at Jammin's and Token Entry and Supertouch at NYU in '89. By 1990, the scene was starting to sort of fade away. There was only one show a month. Those were the CBGB's matinees. Still even in the 90's when hardcore was banned from all the clubs I still saw some great shows!!! Killing Time/ Gorilla Biscuits/ Supertouch/ Burn at CBGB's, Leeway, Sheer Terror, Icemen, Breakdown, Agnostic Front, SOIA, GB, Rest in Pieces, Supertouch, etc. You'll never see these bands on the same bill together. Ever! So, I still caught the good shows. Countless. The scene died from violence straight up violence. If anyone's reading this... don't beat the kids down at the shows. Unless you have a legitimate reason hahaha! It'll kill your scene. I've seen it happen everywhere. The scene is definitely different. Back then, I wanted to do one thing and one thing only. Spread NYHC throughout the world. That was what I lived for. Now 15 years later it's everywhere. I've played in Croatia, Israel, Australia, everywhere. It's amazing to know that kids in Serbia know about Outburst when they only did a 7" and broke up 14 yrs. ago. That is a real trip.

How did you wind up playing with Crown of Thornz?

How did I end up in the infamous C.O.T.? Jackson Heights. That's where EzeC grew up and that's where I grew up. We go back a long way. I mean, I knew EzeC when he was skinny with one tattoo and Ratt stickers on his notebook!! So anyway, we both used to hang all the time and we just said yo! Let's start the baddest and hardest band we can. That was how that started. We had a whole line-up and we got nothing done. We were all friends and we just screwed around and partied during rehearsal and the music was more like Age of Quarrel and Victim in Pain style. Then we kicked the other guys out because they sucked and that's when I called Mike Dijan to join us. I left right after the recording of Train Yard Blues.

When did you get involved with Krishna consciousness?

It was around 1987 when I first knew about the Hare Krishnas. That was because of the Cro-Mags. Age of Quarrel exposed it to me as well as John and Harley's interviews. When Best Wishes came out, I got into it even more. The lyrics were more in that vein and the amazing cover! I had to know the story behind it, y'know? So I thought it was cool philosophy. I started going to the temple in 1993. I was just looking for a higher thought and way of life and that seemed like the best way for me. I practiced this lifestyle pretty hardcore for about 3 years. It was crazy too because this saturated the Hardcore scene all over the world. When 108 needed a bassist I was the perfect fit. There was another Krishna band I was involved with. I forgot the name though hahahaha!!! They sure as hell didn't practice what they preached! Anyway, around 1993 I left that whole movement. It was all religious hypocrisy and scumbags. That's just religion for you. These days, I'm totally out of religion in any way shape or form. But hey, I tried it before I dissed it.

Since those days in the late 80s early 90s, what do you think of the state of NYHC now?

These days, I think the state of NYHC is in pretty good shape, to an extent. The problem is that there's really no clubs that the bands can play in or go to. When Coney Island High closed down, that to me really killed the scene. It was like blowing the leg off a horse. Now it's a fucking Burger King or some shit. So that fucks the new bands up right there. CBGB's and Continental do shows, but on a smaller scale. The funny thing is, the bands keep popping up from out of nowhere. Year after year. Bands break up and then new ones pop up and so on. Sworn Enemy, Most Precious Blood, Hope Conspiracy, the list goes on. New stuff every year. Amidst a scene that is nowhere near what it once was. For what it is, it's good. So, yeah, it's good. As long as it stays alive. It's the violence that kills the scene. Nobody wants to go to shows to catch a beatdown. That's a waste of a night. I understand the violence because when I was younger I had that mentality as well and COT was definitely guilty of promoting that, but you get older. But sometimes it's too late. You get older and when you realise that it's not cool to beat up your supporters, the clubs ban hardcore, they ban your band and the shit just fizzles out like a match in a puddle. Like John Joseph said "the scene in Australia is like what it was in NYC, don't fuck it up with the violence".

Fill me in on some of your fond and negative experiences with: Show of Force

1990. My first band. It was authentic NYHC. Leeway meets Raw Deal. It was fresh and new and I had lots of fun and hope with the band. Playing shows with Outburst and Merauder was fun. It got me to where I am today and it was a real learning experience. The worst part of it was that we were around when the scene was dead. HC was banned from all clubs and there was only one show a month and it was only the big bands. The worst of it was when the singer overdosed. That killed the band because he was irreplaceable. I was really into that band.

Discipline/Ocean of Mercy

1990-1992. The singer was Gus X-Edge and he and I are still good friends to this day. That's a plus from that band. The fun we had on our road trips was great. I was still in high school so I'd cut school to do shows. Like we'd drive to Detroit to open up for Insted and that's really cool when you're a high school kid. We opened up for Shelter numerous times. What was really cool about this band was that Gus wrote all the lyrics and I wrote 90% of the music. We went from traditional HC to more rock-like. Into Another, Quicksand a little bit, Black Sabbath, Supertouch. Some of the best songs I wrote were in that band. I think we were a bit ahead of our time and people really couldn't relate to HC kids playing rock. Again this was in a time when the scene was dead. At it's worst. We broke up when the guitarist left. We went on without him, but it just didn't work. It was us four or nothing. That's how strong the chemistry was within the band.

Crown of Thornz

1993-1994!!!! Ezec was my homeboy! We were ready to take over. This was when the scene was really dead. But in 1994 the scene was bought back to life. This was the year of the thug HC bands. It was the same bill all the time. We had the scene monopolized. Madball, Merauder, 25 Ta Life, Bulldoze and Sub-Zero. That's what it was every show. It was good. We were a clique and we gave each other support. The big problem was violence. At every show, the bouncers would get the shit beat out of them by our crew. Well we got banned from all the clubs for that. I was also in 108 at the same time. It was crazy doing all those shows for two bands. It was like having two girlfriends. We recorded Train Yard Blues, I left for tour with 108, came back did shows with COT, toured with 108, etc. I left in the end of 94 right before TYB came out. I needed a change.

108

1994. Songs of Separation era. I was going to the temple a lot in those days. Being that I was a hardcore kid that played bass and was into the whole Krishna thing, where can we go wrong? This band was my first experience with touring. I got to leave the East Coast for the first time and I got to leave America for the first time. The thing about 108's shows and music was that it was pissed and angry. That's how we felt and that's what showed. That's what made it real. But, it took its toll on me, it was really negative energy. And I was getting a little distant from religion. The other thing was, that I really couldn't relate to those guys. We were from different places and grew up different. I was a street kid from Queens, they were upper class suburban kids. I told Vic that I was leaving the band on the first day of the European tour that the last show of the tour was my last show with the band. No hard feelings.

Shelter

1995-1998, 2001. Oh yeah, that was name of the band hahahaha! That band exposed me to a lot of things... I saw the world in a way that I never thought possible. We toured like crazy! We got the rock star treatment, it was what I wanted. To play music 24/7. I joined because I was still into the Krishna thing at the time, but the vibe was different. Also, I wanted a change of style in music, so it solved both things for me. The positives were all the great and cool people that I met and all the places I saw. I learned a lot about the music business and learned that religious preachers were all crocks of shit. Those guys did not practice what they preach. The band "broke up in 1998" and I left for Los Angeles after that. Then Ray moved to L.A. in 1999 and I rejoined Shelter in 2001 like an idiot. I left because it was the same old shit. Musically and in every way shape or form. You've read all the shit on Ray of Yesterday, it's pretty much all true and then some. Also, Ray gets all the shit, but the bigger scumbag is Porcell. Don't let all his positivity fool you. That guy is a straight up scumbag. I've met ex-convicts with cleaner hearts than that guy. So much for religion and bullshit.

Angermeans

1998-1999. My first band in California. I spoke with Andrew before I moved out to California and he told me Strife is over, etc. and that he wanted to do a new band with Sid and Rick. We exchanged tapes and we got things going. We only played about 3-4 shows, but it was just good to play with cool people that I can trust after all the shit I went through in Shelter. We were supposed to do a record with Victory, but it was just too slow for me and I went back to NY and that was that. I left on good terms.

Strife

2002. I remained friends with those guys after Angermeans and they needed a guitarist. It was at a barbecue at Andrew's house and over the course of the day, one by one, each band member took me to the side and they were like "hey you should play with us and do the European tour". The whole time I'm thinking, "was this shit planned out"? It was just real weird. That was the level of friendship I had with them. I had the most fun with them. The one tour we did was the last Strife tour. I really had wished the band stayed together because I think we really could have done some good things, but it was just meant to not be. I had tons of fun with those guys. I love them man, they're cool.

Cro-Mags

2002-2003. After the Strife tour I got home and was just relaxing. I was thinking to my self "man I have to go find a new job". The phone rings and it was A.J. He goes "Franklin what're you doing these days?" I replied, "well I just got back from the Strife tour and now I need a job". A.J says "I have a proposition for you, Cro-Mags are coming out to California to play some shows and we need a bass player, can you do it?" I paused for a split second. Of course I'd do it! That was my biggest influence in the world. So that's how that went. To play my favorite songs every night with John slam dancing on stage, that's a dream! Also, if it weren't for that tour, I wouldn't have seen Australia. That was the shit. Those guys are my boys, Rocky, G-Man, John, AJ, Gaby. It's unfortunate that Harley and Parris hate my guts. But I was a Cro-Mag fan what can I do?

Bloodclot

2004-? The new shit coming soon! On tour with Last Nerve, one of these days!

What has kept you involved in hardcore and what made you stand the test of time?

The fact that all of my friends are from the hardcore scene and still in the scene has kept me involved. And far as standing the test of time...well one thing is I can never be a regular guy. I'm 31 and I still listen to hard music, my hairs longer, I want more tattoos, I'll say "Fuck You!" to anyone, my love for touring and playing music and again, friends that I have in the scene. It's been my home for years. NYHC!!!

What else is going on in the life of Franklin Rhi?

What else is going on in my life? BLOODCLOT, the new band. TAI-CHI my other band, work, and just wanting to get these bands rolling. I'm also dabbling in writing. I'm going to start doing interviews for my friend Gus X-Edge's mag "Chord" and I have two stories that I'm working on. One is action the other is fantasy. I just do what I have to to stay creative and to pay my bills. Which is where work comes in. Those are some of the things that I'm working on.

What are some of your favourite all time hardcore releases?

Cro-Mags - Age of Quarrel/ Best Wishes

History. That's what those albums are. Any band after 1986 that plays hardcore, well they owe it all to the Cro-Mags. End of discussion. Musically those albums were incredible and untouchable. To this day I listen to them and always will.

Leeway - Born to Expire

This album was a breath of fresh air. It took NYHC music that was getting a bit stagnant and they added new life to it. They added guitar solos, added a metal influence had long hairs in the band and put new blood into the scene. The Cro-Mags are to credit for this as well. Also the little hip-hop influences in hardcore music... well that's thanks to Eddie Sutton.

SOIA - Blood, Sweat and No Tears

This album was my bible when I was 16. It captured the anger of a young kid that's an outcast and gave him something to look up to. This is the quintessential NYHC record of the 2nd generation.

Killing Time - Brightside

What a fucking record! Same as the first SOIA. It was pissed, but had melody and good musicianship. A true Alleyway classic.

Agnostic Front - Victim in Pain

This set the stage for the next decades to come. Very real and very sincere. The album that bridged the gap between punk and hardcore.

Bad Brains - Banned in DC

Without them... there would be no Cro-Mags! What more needs to be said?

Antidote 7", Rest in Pieces - My Rage LP, Straight Ahead, etc. The list goes on...

Did it ever get to the point where you thought 'why do I even bother with hardcore'?

Of course. There are a lot of close-minded people in the hardcore scene and it makes it miserable sometimes. Worrying about what other people eat, smoke or drink, giving bands shit if everything you put out doesn't sound like the first album, getting too involved in your personal life, your not allowed to make any money (so I have to starve to please some asshole's warped sense of ethics), lots of disloyalty, kids getting beat up at shows, it all gets tiresome. As long as I'm not like that and I don't let the stupidity bother me, it's cool...

Tell me a good tour story...

Summer 2002 in Austria. It was the Strife Angermeans European Tour. We played this festival with some chump ass band called Cake and the bouncers were being dicks and assholes. They would abuse anyone that was on the stage and they threw this one guy off and he broke his leg because it was a high drop. Then we told our sampler Josh Melenger (RIP) "we'll give you \$100 if you go on the stage" he did and a bouncer pushed him. Once I saw that I started hitting the bouncer and the whole band jumped in and all 7 of us were on stage while Cake was playing, brawling with these huge Austrian bouncers. This bouncer was 6 feet tall and like 300 pounds, I'm 150 lbs and he was running from me because I just kept swinging on his head and welting it with my ring!! We beat up all the bouncers and just raised hell. It was total war and mayhem on stage and all this happened during their encore. Their set was cut short obviously. That was a good one. I think the audience enjoyed the brawl more than Cake's wimpy set.

Gorilla Biscuits - LP or 7"?

L.P all the way! It's just better on a musical level and a lot more definitive. The 7" has a rawness that you can't really capture, but the LP it's just miles ahead or I should say kilometers ahead. Yeah the album is just more intense and harder.

Youth of Today or Judge?

I could care less about either band. I never was into them.

Absolution or Burn?

Absolution. I just liked them more for the style. It was more of the classic NYHC sound where as Burn was more of that post hardcore artsy revelation style that I didn't really care for. Burn had energy and they were good, but Absolution it will be.

Beyond or Underdog?

That's a hard one, but maybe Underdog. Ritchie is one of my favorite vocalists and they were pretty experimental which took balls to do in 1989 in the NYHC scene.

Into Another or Quicksand?

Dude, that's easy. Into Another. Have you ever heard Soul Control (the last album that was never released)? Fucking incredible! They are one of the greatest bands to ever grace a stage. They were never given a chance because they were on such shitty ass record labels. The fact that they didn't get the huge success they deserved is a true tragedy. Tony Bono is one of the greatest bass players in the world, ever! The whole band was incredible. I saw them so many times at CBGB's where Tony Bono's amp was one foot away from my head. Amazing. It makes you want to give up on the bass. I have to give props to Quicksand. They did something totally new, unique and different. And Slip was a great debut for them. But since my tastes lean towards the metal side of things, Into Another.

What do you have planned for the future both in and outside of hardcore?

My future in HC is to just keep playing. The other day I played at CBGB's (first Bloodclot show) and every time I go to CBGB's I always see people from my teenage years and it's cool to see that they still come around. I was talking to Jorge (ex Merauder, Ragmen) and I was like "it's crazy when we were 17 we were doing this and 14 years later here we are still hanging out at the shows". I'll always have some kind of involvement in the NYHC scene. Those are my roots boy! Outside of hardcore, my writing, the other band Tai-Chi, real estate investment and to just keep it real. Like I said, I'll never be a part of the mainstream. I started out in this in 1990. I'm still here playing music, shows and not being a regular guy. I'm the real deal. Peace!!!



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